

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JIDDA 04969 171206Z

ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8950

S E C R E T JIDDA 4969

NODIS/CHEROKEE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SA, XF

SUBJECT: PLO PARTICIPATION IN MEPC

REF: STATE 163131

1. AMBASSADOR ACCOMPANIED BY DCM CONVEYED POINTS SPECIFIED IN PARA 1 REFTEL TO FOREIGN MINISTER ON JULY 16. IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO AMBASSADOR'S APPOINTMENT, FOREIGN MINISTER HAD HAD LENGTHY MEETING WITH FARUQ QADDOUMI, THE "FOREIGN MINISTER" OF THE PLO. ACCORDING TO FONMIN, ONE PURPOSE OF HIS MEETING WITH THE PALESTINIAN DELEGATION WAS TO EXPLORE POSSIBILITIES OF WORKING OUT SOME SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION AT MEPC.

2. SAUD THEN EXPLAINED THAT HIS INTEREST IN THIS MATTER WAS MOTIVATED BY HIS DESIRE TO BE HELPFUL TO THE USG IN EXTRACTING ITSELF FROM THE PROBLEMS CREATED BY SECRETARY KISSINGER'S COMMITMENT TO ISRAEL ON USG NON-RECOGNITION OF THE PLO. IF THE PLO COULD NOW COME FORWARD WITH AN ACCEPTANCE OF RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338 WITH SOME POSITIVE RESERVATIONS CONCERNING THE FAILURE OF THESE RESOLUTIONS TO REFER TO THE PALESTINIANS AS ANYTHING OTHER THAN REFUGEES, SUCH AN ACTION WOULD GIVE THE USG A CHANCE TO REVIEW ITS COMMITMENT ON NON-RECOGNITION.

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ACCORDING TO SAUD, THE ONLY OTHER WAY OUT OF THIS DILEMMA WOULD BE A NEW RESOLUTION BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL MAKING REFERENCE TO THE PALESTINIANS AS A POLITICAL ENTITY. THIS WOULD, OF COURSE, REQUIRE THAT THE U.S. NOT EXERCISE ITS RIGHT TO VETO.

3. SAUD THEN SAID THAT HE HOPED THAT SOMETHING COULD BE

WORKED OUT NOW SINCE IT WOULD MAKE THE WHOLE PROCESS EASIER DURING THE SECRETARY'S TRIP TO THE AREA. IDEALLY, IT WOULD BE BETTER IF THERE COULD BE SOME MOTION ON THIS ISSUE BEFORE PRESIDENT CARTER MEETS WITH PRIME MINISTER BEGIN ON JULY 19.

4. SAUD THEN EXPANDED ON THE U.S. ROLE AS PEACEMAKER AND SAID THAT THERE IS A BASIC IMBALANCE IN THE U.S. POSITION AS LONG AS IT DOES NOT RECOGNIZE THE PLO. THE MOST ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT FOR PEACE IS AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE PALESTINIANS AND THE ISRAELIS. FAILURE TO RECOGNIZE THE PLO MAKES IT DIFFICULT FOR THE USG TO PLAY A MEDIARY ROLE BETWEEN THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT PARTIES.

5. THE DCM SUGGESTED THAT ONE OF THE PROBLEMS WAS TO DETERMINE WHO CAN LEGITIMATELY SPEAK FOR THE PALESTINIANS. SAUD REPLIED THAT THIS ISSUE HAD BEEN SETTLED BY THE WEST BANK ELECTIONS WHERE THE PLO SUPPORTERS HAD SWEEPED THE GREAT MAJORITY OF THE RACES. HE SAID THAT SINCE THE ELECTIONS THERE SHOULD NO LONGER BE ANY DOUBT THAT THE PLO HAS A LEGITIMATE MANDATE AS THE PALESTINIAN SPOKESMAN.

6. SAUD ASKED THAT WE AGAIN RAISE WITH THE DEPARTMENT THE QUESTION OF WHAT KIND OF POSITIVE RESERVATION BY THE PLO WOULD BE USEFUL TO THE USG. HE SAID THAT HE WILL SOON BE SEEING ARAFAT AND WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO DISCUSS THIS MATTER WITH HIM.

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7. COMMENT: IT APPEARS TO US THAT SAUD IS WORKING IN GOOD FAITH TO RESOLVE WHAT NOW SEEMS TO BE THE MAJOR HURDLE TO THE CONVENING OF THE MEPC, I.E., THE QUESTION OF PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION. IF WE ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO SUGGEST SPECIFIC LANGUAGE FOR A "POSITIVE RESERVATION" BY THE PLO, IT MIGHT BE HELPFUL TO SAUD IF WE COULD DEFINE THE GENERAL AREA OR RANGE OF POSSIBLE STATEMENTS BY THE PLO WHICH WOULD MAKE IT EASIER FOR US TO RECOGNIZE THE PLO AS A LEGITIMATE PARTY IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS.

WEST

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Sent Date: 17-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
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